



## Bike Patrol 1997



Captain Joy Citta



Sergeant Mike Siefkes



Sergeant Valerie Kinghorn



Officer Jim Ashley



Officer Mike Bassett



Officer Jeff Bucher



Officer Tom Duden



Officer Charlie Marti



Officer Lance Worley



1997 Above and Beyond  
Officer Charlie Marti was featured in an October 1997 news report by Channel 8 about policing by bike. Here he jumps onto the dock in the Haymarket.



1997 Bike Patrol

Officer Jeff Bucher, Officer Mike Bassett, Officer Tom Duden, Sgt. Val Kinghorn, Officer Jim Ashley, Officer Charlie Marti



The Bike Squad was well known for their ability to hide in plain sight.

1997 Midwest Police Bike Competition  
Overall Champion All Events  
9-28-1997  
Officer Charlie Marti and Officer Lance Worley





GAIL FOLDA/Lincoln Journal Star

▲ Sgt. Mike Siefkes, a Lincoln bicycle patrol policeman, entertains Dane Willey (left), 2, and his brother Wyn, 4.

## Balloons help bike patrol

BY PATTY BEUTLER  
Lincoln Journal Star

If you hear a loud pop these days around the Lincoln Police Department's downtown bike patrol, it's more likely to be a balloon than a service revolver.

Armed with bike pumps and balloons, six officers and one sergeant dispense cheer along with crime prevention.

In a moment's time, they pump air into brightly colored balloon tubes, add a twist here, a knot there and voila! — a reindeer, rabbit, giraffe, dog or space hat appears, along with a big smile on the face of a waiting youngster.

It's all in the line of duty, says Sgt. Mike Siefkes, who heads the bike patrol.

Because the bike cops are so

accessible to the public when patrolling downtown festivals and events, they've come up with goodies, such as badges and sports cards, to hand out to children.

The balloons are just another tool in their arsenal of public relations, courtesy of training by local clowns named Jello-O and Maverick. Sometimes they turn their balloons into bike helmets to preach bike safety.

The balloons are light to carry and inexpensive to buy, Siefkes said. A gift from the Updowntowners paid for balloons and bike helmets for the officers.

The officers have been at it for about eight months now, perfecting their individual creations and working up good explanations when a pre-schooler watches his would-be creature

explode before his very eyes.

That happened Wednesday morning during a coffee break at The Mill, when Wyn Willey, 4, admonished Siefkes. "You ought to be able to make better balloons because you're a policeman," he said.

The officers might stop in at the Lincoln Children's Museum, if they have time, and whip up a couple of animal friends for kids there. At the Christmas tree lighting ceremony last December, they used more than 800 balloons to entertain youngsters.

Officers keep the faith with Jell-O the Clown, Siefkes said, by never distributing balloon animals to children under age 3 and by reminding youngsters to pick up popped balloons so the birds won't eat them.



## Police want cycle-free sidewalks

By TED TAYLOR  
Assignment Reporter

Lincoln police have something to say to bicyclists, skateboarders and in-line skaters: Get off downtown sidewalks.

Officers are sending that message as clear as they can with a little white piece of paper that is usually reserved only for vehicles with four wheels — tickets.

Police have stepped up patrolling downtown and are now writing \$26 tickets quicker than you can say, "But officer..." They

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# Sidewalk riding earns tickets

## Police step up enforcement in city

**TICKETS** from page 1  
can't be waived.

In 55 minutes Wednesday, Lincoln police Officer Conan Schafer wrote four tickets to unsuspecting bikers cruising along the sidewalks near 14th and O streets. And that was just the first hour.

"We'll start getting busier now," he said as a lunch hour crowd began to hit the sidewalks.

Between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Tuesday, 18 citations were handed out in the three hours — all to protect pedestrians and the bicyclists, Officer Tom Duden said.

"We started to get a lot of complaints from downtown businesses," Duden said. "So this year we decided to write official citations to begin the education process right away."

"We've had a lot of people come up to us and say they're thankful we're handing out tickets."

The tickets are met with the usual responses, Duden said. Some people understand the situation and

accept the ticket and go on their way. Others are hostile and don't understand why it is such a big deal.

Mick Rodysill, a sophomore art education major at UNL, was stopped at the corner of 14th and O streets just before noon Wednesday.

He was lucky, Schafer said. He received a verbal warning because he had only been riding a few feet on the sidewalk before being stopped.

"I didn't know it was illegal," Rodysill said. "I thought there was only one or two blocks in the whole city that you couldn't ride on."

The ordinance puts bicyclists in a no-win situation, he added.

"It's a Catch-22," he said. "If you're riding on the street you fight with the drivers. If you ride on the sidewalks you fight with the pedestrians."

And while it may seem like it for many, riding on downtown sidewalks did not become a crime overnight. In fact, the first city ordinance designed to stop it was passed in April 1954.

Since then, the off-limits area has expanded with the city and now extends from Seventh to 16th streets, and from K Street to R Street. The Havelock, Bethany, College View and University Place areas of Lincoln are also restricted.

"Most of the people we stop don't know about the ordinance," Duden said. "We've tried to get the city to put more signs up, but I don't know if it's a lack of funding or a lack of interest, but we just don't get much help."

There are a few signs attached to bike racks in the restricted areas, Duden said, but most have been vandalized or taken down.

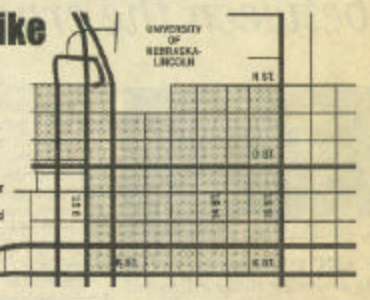
Lincoln Mayor Mike Johanns said the issue of more signs had not been presented to him.

"I don't think the topic has come to my desk," he said. "If it did, I would treat this like I would if a neighborhood came to me for a new sign. I see no reason why we can't get out and do it."

Cost, Johanns said, would not be a factor.

### Don't Bike

Police have been cracking down on violators of city street ordinances. The shaded area shows the parts of downtown Lincoln where using bicycles, skateboards or other similar modes of travel are not allowed on sidewalks.



AARON STROCK/REUTERS

"In the grand scheme of things, considering we have an \$85 million budget, the cost can't be very much," he said.

Failing to get off of your bike, take off your skates or carry your skateboard on the restricted sidewalks could mean much more than a simple \$26 ticket, Duden said.

Skaters and bikers riding on the sidewalk give up their right of way, according to another city ordinance, Duden has, in the past, been

forced to give tickets to cyclists who have just been hit by a car coming out of an alley.

New signs would be a huge help in alleviating the problem, Duden said. And they hope, Duden said, handing out more tickets will too.

"There is a lot of frustration on our part that there is no compliance with the ordinance," he said. "We're hoping that the world will get out that this is a serious problem."